

Rep. James Lankford - July 25, 2012

Individuals have expressed that the "game is over" since the Supreme Court has ruled on the president's health care law. While the court upheld the constitutionality of the law through a tortured argument referred to in the dissent as "judicial taxation" and a "rewrite of the law," even the majority opinion of the court would not rule on the "wisdom of the law."

The president touts a new freebie each week in the health care law, and taxpayer-funded commercials run on TV and radio touting its benefits. As a person with a front-row seat to federal government inefficiency, I don't understand how anyone can believe that giving the federal government control of private health care decisions will yield better, more efficient or more effective outcomes for patients. The Congressional Budget Office just changed the 10-year cost revision from \$800 billion to \$1.8 trillion, and the law isn't even fully rolled out yet. When was the last time the federal government took over a state or private business function and made it more efficient or effective? The status quo in health care is unacceptable, but federal government control is even worse.

Right now companies are evaluating how many people they will move to part time to avoid the mandate. Companies with 50 or fewer employees have an incentive not to grow. Other companies will evaluate the cost of the tax or the cost of the insurance premiums since everyone will get "free" health care anyway. More than 20 new taxes kick in over the next two years, including one on people with high medical bills (yes, the deduction for individuals with high medical bills just changed, so they will pay more in taxes to offset the cost of the uninsured).

No one has any idea what proposals will come from the new Independent Payment Advisory Board (IPAB) appointed by the president in 2013. IPAB is charged with selecting which procedures, prescriptions and providers are too expensive, and it can "deny coverage without any review." IPAB is only one of more than 150 boards, departments or agencies created by the law.

By the way, do you remember the president's promise, "If you like your insurance you can keep it"? The administration recently estimated that up to 80 percent of all small business and 64 percent of medium- to large-company health plans won't be grandfathered after 2013.

Translation: Your policy will change. Also, since the new law punished hospitals owned by physicians, all of the physician-owned hospitals in Oklahoma are headed for major changes.

There are free-market proposals on the table to provide portability, cover high-risk individuals, increase competition and provide for those in true poverty. But this administration honestly believes a few people in Washington are more compassionate and more efficient than any state leader, any local hospital or any private company. I just happen to disagree.

If people think health care is complicated and expensive now, just wait until it's "free."

Lankford, R-Oklahoma City, represents Oklahoma's 5th Congressional District.

As a person with a front-row seat to federal government inefficiency, I don't understand how anyone can believe that giving the federal government control of private health care decisions will yield better, more efficient or more effective outcomes for patients.

Online: [The Oklahoman](#)